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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. STEVENS].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Everlasting God, our light and our salvation, You are our strength and shield. We thank You for Your great and precious promises. You have promised to supply our needs and to lead us toward abundant living. Thank You also for the promise of Your eternal presence.

Lord, forgive us when we surrender to those influences that draw us downward. Bless the Members of this body. Teach them that Your hand is on the helm of human affairs and that You still guide Your world. Bless our military people who daily risk their lives for liberty. Console those who grieve, who count the empty places and long for the sound of a voice that is still. Lord, renew our strength and give us the courage to carry on. We pray this in Your strong name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning the Senate will resume consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2673, the Omnibus appropriations bill. A number of Senators

will want to speak on that measure over the course of today, as well, I am sure, to make comments on the President's State of the Union Address last evening. The time until 6 p.m. today will be equally divided for debate to accommodate those statements.

Although yesterday we were unable to invoke cloture, I do hope we will be able to finish this important funding legislation prior to finishing our business for the week. I will continue to be in discussions with the Democratic leader with the hope of reaching consent to allow the Senate to work its will on the Omnibus conference report.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I look forward to having further discussions with the majority leader with regard to taking the next legislative step with regard to the Omnibus bill. I am sure we will be able to reach some understanding as to how we might complete our work on this legislation.

I do think it is important, as we said yesterday, for the Senate to focus its attention on some of the issues we cited yesterday as real policy concerns. There were procedural concerns about how we got here, but the policy concerns are the ones that can be addressed and can be fixed. If we are not able to fix them in this legislation, I certainly want to assure my colleagues we will look for other vehicles and other ways to address each of these issues over the course of the next several weeks and months.

I will have more to say about that later in the day, but I will certainly work with our majority leader in addressing the schedule and providing options for ways in which we can complete our work on this bill perhaps this week.

I urge colleagues to recognize the opportunity the day presents to discuss

some of these issues. I know there are many on our side who intend to do that. The time is equally divided. We certainly intend to use the time that will be allocated to this side throughout the day to discuss many of these issues.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, while the two leaders are here—I have not had an opportunity to discuss this with either of them—floor staff has indicated when the majority leader finishes his statement Senator DORGAN is here wishing to speak. Following that, Senator REED of Rhode Island would like to speak, and then Senator BOXER. We understand if there are Republicans, we will alternate, but I wanted to give them the roll of those who indicated they would like to come prior to Senator BYRD and Senator MCCAIN speaking this afternoon.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, we can talk during the speeches, but my understanding is we will alternate back and forth.

Mr. DASCHLE. Yes.

Mr. FRIST. I will make a stronger statement probably for 30 minutes, and after that we can alternate back and forth.

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair announces the following appointment made on January 6, 2004, during the sine die adjournment:

Pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 108-136, on behalf of the Democratic Leader, the appointment of the following individuals to serve as members of the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission: Mike O'Callaghan, of Nevada, and Rick Surratt, of Virginia.

RECOGNIZING 2004 AS THE "50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROCK 'N' ROLL"

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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